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ABSTRACT

Guidelines are presented for implementing field placements in social gerontology courses. After an introduction comparing the focus, objectives, and content of two types of experience--the liberal arts field placement and the human services internship--the paper is divided into three sections. These outline recommendations for the organization, execution, and evaluation of field placements. In section 1, procedures for organizing successful placements are suggested. Discussion centers on identifying and securing field sites, establishing good communications with the field site organizations, and preparing students to operate comfortably and responsibly in the field setting. The opportunities to link theory with practical concerns in this preliminary student training are emphasized, and possible training activities are provided. Section 2 addresses the task of executing the field placement. The needs to define clearly the assignment requirements and to match carefully the student and field agency are cited as primary considerations. The recording of student experiences is seen as a fundamental part of the assignment, and various methods for accomplishing this are assessed. Three methods of evaluating the field placement, outlined in the final section, are routine teacher grading based on the quality of written requirements, discussion of student reactions, and solicitation of the opinion of participating community organizations. The latter two are offered as ways to improve subsequent experiences. Appendices include a form letter of inquiry for field placement, an outline of expectations for internship students, a listing of field placement opportunities, student and field organization evaluation forms, and an abridged syllabus. (LP)

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# FIELD PLACEMENT IN SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY

by

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This paper was prepared for presentation at the 1983 annual meetings of the American Sociological Association in Detroit. "Teaching Applied Sociology: Challenges and Opportunities", session sponsored by the section on Undergraduate Education.

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FIELD PLACEMENT IN SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY, by Janet Huber Lowry, Austin College, Sherman, TX (formerly Hamilton College in NY) and Elin Cormican, Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, New York.


ABSTRACT

The use of field placement in social gerontology and human services courses is examined by instructors trained in sociology and social work. Discussion centers on procedures necessary to insure success as well as outcomes for students in relation to the placements. Procedures reviewed include securing field sites, effective communication with organization representatives, preliminary training for students, seminars of student sharing, the nature of student assignments (written/oral/visual), evaluation of field placement by students and field supervisors and recognition of participants. Experiences and outcomes for students are presented in relation to three types of field settings - senior centers, social service agencies, and residential care facilities. Successful completion of journals as well as selection and execution of special projects are related to these types. Differences and similarities in the goals for sociology and human services students correspond to concerns of liberal arts education, study of social organization, research, issues of occupational preparation, skill-building and experience. How people in their 30's and 40's teach people in their 20's about people in their 60's, 70's, 80's, and 90's can clearly be enhanced by following guidelines developed in this paper.

## Introduction

Field placement as part of a traditional social gerontology course for liberal arts students is not the internship that human services students experience. Field placement is an opportunity to observe and question in a setting where older people are found as participants, clients or residents. Internship is an opportunity to learn and apply vocational skills and assume some responsibility in an organization delivering human services. However, in exploring the differences of these field experiences, we found that our steps are virtually identical. This paper presents our common process of organizing, executing, and evaluating these opportunities. Along the way we note where differing goals cause us to specify different content. The primary distinction is that of social research (admittedly primitive with undergraduates) and clinical practice, two out of the three types of applied sociology identified by Rossi and Whyte (1983). Before conveying the process, we will review some of the rationale for this exercise and note the parameters of our courses.

Students in liberal arts colleges and in human services courses come to social gerontology in large part because of personal experiences. On the first class day at least 40% mention older relatives whom they consider exceptional in some way. Some have had part of their limited work experience in institutions which are supposed to care for the elderly. Others anticipate a career related to older people. Their questions have been shaped in the real world and the answers are not to be found only in the scholarly world of books and lectures and class discussions.

Their evaluation of their previous experiences is aided by more experience in a setting populated by old people.

In developing field placements the sociological perspective is enhanced by an emphasis on the social organization of growing old in America. Since the field settings are defined by particular organizations the problems and solutions present convey both variety and relevance to the students. While not leaving students totally on their own to explore the situation, such settings allow some flexibility and opportunity to examine issues widely recognized in society. They serve as locations where many people can be observed and the varied experience of growing old in America becomes more salient. The context for understanding what is truly special and what is ordinary about those relatives who motivated the students' course selection can be perceived. The opportunity to test simple hypotheses is available. The effectiveness of bureaucracies in addressing needs can be evaluated.

The greatest differences between liberal arts and human services derive from the objectives of the field experience. We both emphasize linking theoretical material to practical concerns, providing opportunities to test abilities and attitudes, motivating students toward academic achievement, increasing their retention, and establishing additional means of communication between members in community organizations and higher education institutions. The human services internship also emphasizes preparing students for employment, aiding further course selection and providing opportunities for productive and creative service to community organizations as well as special

temporary assistance. (Howery,1983) The latter necessarily requires greater time commitment, but has been accomplished by liberal arts students on short term projects.

Some comments about the context of our courses are warranted. The liberal arts course was taught in a January term. This concentrated study time provided flexibility in student and class time which is very helpful for field trips and off campus observation time. Three days in the field were quite literally full days during a three week period instead of the more typical semester time equivalent in shorter stretches spread over more time. Additional advantages include the minimal imposition upon field site sponsors, less competition with other campuses which may be between schedules, more organizations willing to risk so short a time commitment and, as one sponsor noted, "sufficient [time] for the clients to feel comfortable talking to ... students, but not enough time for them to get attached." The disadvantages of such a short time period in only one season of the year include only brief contact with complex organizations (one sponsor indicated need for "more time to see interrelationship of services"), winter weather hassles, limited opportunity to exercise responsibility or apply skills and little chance to perceive cycles of activity. The human services course covers a full semester of 14 weeks. The occupational preparation aspect demands more time and attention to skill building. The organizations also have greater responsibility in evaluating the students' performance rather than just providing an experience to which their learning can be applied.

## Organization

The organization tasks are the same for sociology and human services courses. Regardless of setting these basic tasks include identifying sites, securing them, educating these sponsors and training students. The main difference we discovered came in the content of sponsor education.

The first task of organizing is identifying potential sites for student field placement. There are three basic types of settings for a gerontologist - senior centers, social service agencies, and residential care facilities. The first are activity and socializing locations open to all elderly. The second are bureaucratic organizations defined by service delivery to particular segments of the older population. The last are total institutions caring for the frail and dependent minority of senior citizens. Together they probably touch the lives of most older Americans when one considers the friends or family of the institutionalized or the recipients of Social Security. In most places the city/county office for aging has a directory of such organizations. The phone book also provides information for institutions though special directories for such facilities are available in most regions.

The second task of organizing involves securing the actual field sites. A letter of inquiry which expresses the course assignment from the standpoint of the organization's responsibility should be sent two or three months prior to the start of the term (see Appendix: Letter of Inquiry). Enclose a self addressed stamped reply card which requests the name of a

contact person for the organization, its location, phone number and the number of students it can accommodate. Follow up phone calls can obtain greater response and establish a convenient time for a site visit. The phone call and visit can be eliminated in subsequent terms but they are crucial in securing an organization as a field site, in placing students at the site, and in evaluating assignments from that site. The human services handbook for supervisors accomplishes the same tasks. It contains description of philosophy, internship definition, time framework, expectations and placements of students, staff liaison function, student log requirements and evaluation criteria. Again, however, actual visits to the site before placement are crucial.

The third task of organizing is educating the organizations about the nature of the assignment. Here a distinction needs to be made between sociology and human services. Most settings are familiar with the clinical model and need to be reeducated to deal with the sociological approach. The student's expectations, the instructor's expectations and the organization's responsibility in providing a setting for inquiry should be covered. This usually involves convincing the contact person of the value of simple observation and questionning for the students and assuring him or her of your ethical awareness and the emphasis you will give to the issues of privacy and confidentiality in preparing your students. After an orientation to the organization most students need little supervision and make few demands on the organization. Some organizations feel unprepared to "teach" students. Minimizing this aspect of the field placement by restricting the organization's role to areas

of its expertise and placing the burden of learning on the students who must connect other assignments to the experience provided by the field site help allay these fears. Many organizations are constantly training occupationally oriented students. While this practice of established internships may make access easy, it may also present an overly structured and largely inappropriate program emphasis for sociology students studying social gerontology. The multidisciplinary focus of this substantive area needs to be emphasized (Streib,1983). Understanding the broader goals of social research in a liberal arts education and the value of discussing issues in social gerontology with older people must be stressed from the beginning. These must be differentiated from vocational skills-building and performance evaluation which are not part of the liberal arts course goals. Important skills are being sharpened by this course but they deal more with observation, questionning, application and communication (see Appendix: Expectations of Students).

The fourth and final task of organizing is training students to operate comfortably, responsibly and independently in the field setting. Information and activity are the basic modes for training. The information mode is simplified by clear descriptions of the settings available and their primary characteristics (see Appendix: Listing of Field Placement Opportunities). These include such concerns as the nature of clientele served, size and scope of operation, expectations of student visitors, opportunities for special interest exploration, travel restrictions and time schedules. Brochures and newsletters

produced by the organizations can contribute another perspective, too. Clearly defined assignments and examples of successful student journals help facilitate desired outcomes and reduce tension. The handbook for students supplies this information for human services students. Ethical concerns of confidentiality, voluntary participation and privacy must be reviewed with the implications for student activities such as coding written work, modifying classroom contributions, and selecting conversation topics in the field. Students need to know that recording observations requires distinguishing fact from interpretation and noting the source of knowledge about different events. Another information and activity training opportunity can come from organizations which supply speakers to discuss "the art of friendly visiting" or the intricacies of Medicare and Medicaid. Such classroom based presentations supply information and a safe environment for questions before being placed on one's own resources in the field setting.

The activity mode in training might include a common assignment to sketch an organization profile for the first day in the field. Outlines for such sketches can be drawn from a county directory which needs updating with examples discussed in class to familiarize students with terminology. Class field trips in the first week, especially to more feared settings (such as nursing homes), establish appropriate expectations for student behavior and provide experience in organizations which can be useful later for comparative reference. Other activities should emphasize the students' roles from observer to participant. It helps to practice these with class demonstrations and to

encourage discussion of how they might vary by student interest, organization expectations, elderly populations, and class assignments. The most important role in all situations is that of learner. It is a particularly effective role for students interacting with older people as teachers though some of the elderly need encouragement about the importance of their experiences, particularly older women. A final training activity could involve a panel of elderly people in the classroom available for student questioning.

Organizing field placements in social gerontology requires considerable effort identifying, securing, and educating sponsor organizations. It also involves training students by supplying information and structuring activities. This work begins to payoff as soon as execution begins.

## Execution

The initial task in executing field placements is assignment definition. Human services students keep a log of activities and what they learned each day in the field. Liberal arts students produce a journal which records the sequence of events, facts and their interpretation, volunteered and solicited information, and commentary on the textbook reading. The first of these entries provides an overview of the time spent in the field for each session along with some sense of the rhythm of the day. The second makes the anthropological field notes distinction between description of activities, people, and settings and the meaning the observer attaches to them. Babbie calls this the difference between what you know and what you think(1983:255). The third

kind of record identifies information sources and later aids the analysis of information by distinguishing what is routinely provided from specific inquiry directed by the observer. The final item ties the experience in the field to the reading assignments of the course requiring assessment of convergence and divergence and possible explanations for the latter. This analysis by students provides the main evidence of their reading and understanding of the text in the context of the real world. The opportunity to use the field setting for a special project assignment should also exist. Life history interviews, photo essays, slide/tape presentations, or topic focused questionnaires are popular at senior centers and residential care facilities where direct contact with the elderly is maximized. Brochure design, public policy research, data analysis, case history and occupational study are frequently pursued in social service agencies. All these projects speak to the importance of qualitative as well as quantitative research methods in applied coursework as encouraged by Kornblum (1983).

The task of matching students with organizations involves considerable diplomacy. It is helpful to have more sites than students and several from each of the three basic types. The former allows the students some choice and the latter permits the instructor some control to better match student interests with organizational opportunities. We ask students to list their top two or three choices and have usually managed to satisfy these requests. Given the human services greater time commitment the faculty serve as liaison to fill in the details for stuanet choices. Some organizations require a preinternship screening

meeting, too. Multiple placements and many sites also entail preparing an organization for the possibility of nonparticipation. For the January term this can be a selling point which encourages initially broad availability without reflecting negatively on those not selected for such a short term. The variety can also encourage wider student participation with the goal of greater comparison in class discussions. The practical details of travel and student schedules (even January term students may have to juggle work time) may further complicate this task so the geographic location and number of placements available must be considered along with student drivers and bus schedules. Our course schedules facilitate time arrangements. The January term liberal arts class meets three days a week for three hours leaving two days free for field placement. The other semester human services classes avoid the two mornings a week when students are at the sites.

The task of sustaining interest and learning in field placements is greatly reduced in the short concentrated term. It can be enhanced in a longer term by regularly scheduled seminars of student sharing. These provide cross-checking of information within types of settings and opportunities to begin to analyze and evaluate the particular experience in a larger context. This exercise is especially helpful for vocationally oriented students wishing to generalize their experience and trying to tackle common problems in the field setting. Panel presentations to the class organized by type of setting are valuable to liberal arts students seeking to identify the universal and particular dimensions of their experience and beginning to synthesize their

observations with material from other assignments in the course. It also provides those in different types of settings with information about the other experiences in this area. Human services students who participate in a variety of internships come together in one seminar with faculty supervisors who may or may not be their liaison. Thus they constantly benefit from such comparisons. Offering to check student journals and logs early in the term also gives them a chance to do well and for the instructor to clear up any misconceptions. Providing the organizations with phone number and office hours for staying in touch with the instructor can help them discuss problems and clarify expectations early in the placement assignment. The human services faculty liaison to the sponsor visits the field site at least three times to observe students and to help the agency feel it has not been "stuck" with an abandonned student.

Our procedures though similar differ in the execution step because our goals and the resulting time requirements vary. In the final step our evaluating concerns are identical. Again the greater time and supervision by the sponsor call for greater input into this part of the process.

## Evaluation

The task of evaluating includes two kinds of assessments. The first examines the adequacy of student assignments in meeting the goals of the course. The second considers information from all parties - students, field site organizations, and the instructor - about the success of the overall experience.

The first involves routine end of term evaluation by

assigning grades based on completion and quality of written work and perhaps special projects in other media. Most liberal arts students handle the request for a time schedule and a basic description of events along with some interpretation of what they see and hear rather well. Likewise most human services students have no trouble logging their activities, though many should give more time to details. Some ignore the distinction between volunteered and solicitied information or are sloppy in designating a code for the instructor to decipher. The most difficult aspect of the journal for liberal arts students has been their seeing and demonstrating the connections between the experience and the text reading. Likewise the greatest gap in the human services students logs are their recording what they think they learned, i.e. "what did you get out of what you did." While the tendency for liberal arts students to see everything as connected and appropriate for commentary is to be avoided, one sentence of a chapter's key idea as it relates to the field is too scant. Some guidelines we have found useful include one page for each hour spent in the field, or no more than one hour of writing for every three hours in the field. Students comfortable with testing as the means of evaluation seem to have particular difficulty reporting and documenting the degree to which their journal entries come out of their reading as well as their experience. Eventhough some settings cover limited aspects of the lives of elderly in America (residential care facilities or specialized social service agencies, for example), they do afford comparison and information from the past lives of particular individuals which can be associated with issues of working, families, finances, etc..

The second assessment concerns the satisfaction of all participants and the future of field placement for the course. We shall consider student reactions, sponsor comments and instructor views.

While student satisfaction with the field placement should be a routine part of course evaluations, it is usually so strong as to prompt many unsolicited statements of intent to continue associations beyond the term (recorded in their journals or proclaimed aloud in class discussions). Few liberal arts students (one or two) select the course because of the field placement. Yet most (11 out of 13 responding in 1981 and 16 out of 19 responding in 1983) consider this aspect the greatest strength of the course.

> the most difficult and the most beneficial
> interesting and informative
> fieldwork gave insight that reading and lectures never could
> gratifying to work with elderly for knowledge and personally

While identifying future work roles is not the assignment goal, it frequently provides the motivation to make the most of the field placement. Some of the best learning for students, liberal arts or human services, is the realization that they couldn't stand to work in the setting they were privileged to observe. In evaluating the possible success of the January term liberal arts course as a semester course, most students felt the change would benefit the field placement by creating less of a rush in learning and more time to discuss the reading. The possibility of rotating to different types of settings was also suggested. When

asked to whom they would recommend this course, the majority said anyone and everyone, especially non sociology majors.

The success of the experience for the participating organizations should also be evaluated. In fact, part of the initial letter of inquiry should describe a simple evaluation request as one of the responsibilities of a participating organization. In a short term or for the liberal arts course, this evaluation is not part of a student's course grade, but rather the opportunity to thank the cooperating organizations and to secure their suggestions for improvements in subsequent field placements (see Appendix: Letter of Evaluation / Internship Evaluation Form). This information can include changes in initial instructions to organizations, student expectations and training, adequacy of time, number of participants for future courses, identification of other possible field placement sites and willingness to serve as a reference as the instructor tries to secure more organizations as field placement sites. Comments from sponsors have included:

> [the visit helped] in getting an idea of where you as the educator were coming from and what you wanted students to be exposed to
>
> [students] were keen to do research and tentative and polite and that was necessary and sufficient preparation
>
> [time for] good overview and good general idea of centers residents enjoy visiting to break up their day
>
> we like their [students'] need for an overview experience, not a specific task or discipline
>
> doubt time provides enough clinical experience

residents benefitted greatly from student visits

Availability of speakers and opportunity for class field trips can also be obtained. For human services students more elaborate behavioral objectives have been developed for use in the sponsor's evaluating of the student in the internship. These cover student attributes, understanding of the setting, interaction and communication skills, weaknesses and strengths. It is important to remind field supervisors that the context is that of a second year college student, not upper class or graduate level. Having the faculty liaison collect these forms at the last site observation each term assures their availability by grading deadlines.

As instructors we see that both class size (30 and 25 were the largest classes ever for the liberal arts instructor) and student enthusiasm are important indicators of the success of field placement. The opportunity for application of both theory from social gerontology and research methods from other coursework is exciting. This avoids the dichotomy pointed out by Costner (1983) between applied sociology and applied social research methodology as he discussed "reconnaissance sociology". It also fulfills basic assumptions of applied sociology curricula, that it emphasize a sound base in sociological theory as well as methods, cover interdisciplinary perspectives, and provide experience in real environments (Bhatia, 1983). That students finally see the value of previous learning is quite gratifying, though harder to assure in the liberal arts context with its minimal prerequisites. (Only about two thirds of the students had had any sociology before the January term course.)

In this light it is also good to see some students finally attracted to sociology because of the interest generated by social gerontology. The stimulation of community relationships with practitioners can also provide fulfillment in directing research to important local problems and satisfaction from being of service to colleagues on the frontline not to mention the clarity and concreteness of classroom illustrations from the immediate vicinity.

One additional consideration in the evaluating process is maintaining good relations between the community and the college. A letter from the instructor to the chief academic officer is a good way to recognize the cooperating organizations. It may be followed by a letter of appreciation from the administration to these sponsors of field placement (a feature on which several have commented favorably). This practice helps insure continued participation. It also keeps the dean aware of the extra effort of the instructor to help enliven student learning in the wider world. (It may not get you tenured or even reappointed but it makes for more concrete letters of recommendation when you start looking elsewhere.)

## Conclusion

We have tried in this paper to provide guidelines for field placement in social gerontology courses as a vehicle for student investigation and lively class discussion. The subject permits us to emphasize both theory and methods in this area of applied sociology. We found great similarity between the procedures used in a liberal arts course and a human services internship. The slight differences appear because of the time involved and the goals applied (social research vs. clinical practice). We have suggested that organizing presents the tasks of identifying organizations, securing settings, educating sponsors, and training students. Executing involves the tasks of defining assignments, matching students with sponsors, supervising field experience, establishing seminars for student sharing or (in more limited time) requiring panel presentations by students based on type of setting - senior centers, social service agencies, and residential care facilities - and checking journals. The evaluating includes both grading student work and assessing the success of the field placement for students and sponsors in such a way as to improve subsequent participation. Material from the syllabus and handbooks and forms used for the courses are attached for reference and should be modified in new contexts and after each evaluation.

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MVCC Human Services Internship - Handbook for Students 1983-84.

MVCC Human Services Internship - Handbook for Supervisors 1983-84.

These are 30-5 page booklets produced by the department.

APPENDIX: LETTER OF INQUIRY FOR FIELD PLACEMENT

I write to ask if your organization will again serve as a placement site for student(s) in my upcoming January term course, SOC 230, Growing Old in America. This letter is meant to provide a record of my expectations of the students' field assignments. The primary operating principle is that the student's opportunity to observe and question not interfere with the normal functioning of your organization. They will be required to maintain a journal of activities and observations while in the field and reflections on the related reading assignments for the course. They will be expected to spend three days in the field (either Tuesdays or Thursdays given the Monday-Wednesday-Friday class schedule). This will amount to 15-20 hours total during the month of January. In a few instances some renegotiations may be appropriate given events at the site, snow complications, and carpooling needs. It is hoped that students will also have an opportunity to conduct some life history interviewing during their fieldwork.

I will stress the need for confidentiality, even in their journals, and their responsibility to ask questions at convenient times.

I expect the organizations participating in this field assignment to provide an orientation and overview of their operations to my students. Beyond this, no extraordinary effort is expected because the availability of your organization and the student's observant presence should satisfy my goals for the knowledge and skills to be obtained in this course. This kind of reality testing is a unique opportunity of the January term. The student's more critical stance in relation to the course material to be covered is the hoped for achievement.

If these terms meet with your expectations please return the enclosed postcard with the appropriate information requested. You should expect a call from the student(s) on January 3, 4, or 5, 1983. My telephone number is 859-4236.

Very truly yours,

**********

- sample reply card -

Our organization_____

is willing to be a field site in January. Have the interested

student(s) #_____ contact_____

title _____

phone _____

address_____

_____

Any special requirements?_____
(transportation, dress, days, etc.)

## APPENDIX: EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

The following items have been presented to all Human Service internship students and illustrate the expectations the Human Service Program has for all internship students regardless of their sequence or the setting. The students are expected to:

* 1. Report to the setting punctually on all of the assigned days, and call their supervisor (as early as possible) if unable to attend. Days missed should be made up.

* 2. Maintain a professional manner in their dealings with both the personnel at the setting and with the clients served by the setting.

* 3. Become familiar with the overall structure of the setting.

4. Become familiar with the roles and/or functions of the professional and paraprofessional staff of the setting.

* 5. Become aware of community services, resources and educational facilities available for service to clients of the setting.

6. Participate in staff conferences (whenever made available by the setting) in order to develop goals, clarify procedures, etc.

* 7. Acquire knowledge of and familiarity with the socio-economic level of the clientele and the community served by the setting.

* 8. Protect the client's rights to privacy and confidentiality at all times.

9. Become familiar with the uses of the records of the setting.

*10. Maintain attentive behavior and provide information in a friendly, but neutral and objective manner.

11. Plan activities with consideration to the physical needs and/or mental limitations and capabilities of clients.

12. Evaluate the progress made by the client(s) toward specific goals.

13. Participate in the evaluation of the client's achievement and/or adjustment.

*14. Utilize available resources to full and creative advantage.

*15. Use language and expressions that the client can understand.

16. Assist in the preparation of any records required by the setting.

*17. Write accurate written reports of client behavior.

*18. Enjoy the learning experience at the setting.

* These expectations are required for liberal arts students, others optional.

APPENDIX: LISTING OF FIELD PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- general format -

| administrator | contact person | phone | days | # of students |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| organization name | | description of program, | | |
| address | (map code) | clientele, physical facility | | |

- sample senior center entry -

| | (same) | 733-4567 | any | 1-4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mrs. Edith Smith, Director | | city affiliated non-profit org. | | |
| South Side Senior Center | | varied activities, nutritional, | | |
| 2525 Pine Street | (#24) | recreational, educational- | | |
| Utica, New York 13901 | | any over 60, converted house | | |

- sample residential care facility -

| | Ms. Susan Tower | 724-7890 | T only | 1 or 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Social Services Dept. | | | |
| Mr. Ross Jones, Director | | skilled nursing facility, | | |
| Mohawk Nursing Home | | various departments involved- | | |
| 850 West Floyd Avenue | (#3) | mostly native residents meeting | | |
| Rome, New York 13802 | | medical requirements, proprietary | | |

- sample social service agency -

| | Ms. Karen Nelson | 743-8765 | T or TH | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Program Coordinator | | | |
| Mrs. Norma Dunlop, Director | | federally designed program | | |
| R.S.V.P. Retired Senior Volunteer | | serves wide area and interfaces | | |
| Program of Oneida County | | with other services while | | |
| 1492 N. Main Street | (#10) | linking community needs with | | |
| Utica, New York 13902 | | active seniors, varied locations | | |

APPENDIX: LETTER OF EVALUATION / INTERNSHIP EVALUATION FORM

HAMILTON COLLEGE
Clinton, New York 13323

Department of Sociology

January 29, 1981

I write to thank you for permitting students from my sociology course to visit your organization for their fieldwork assignments. It is clear that they benefitted very much from this advantage to learn about growing old in America in the real world. They balanced this reality against the academic discussions of their reading and classroom work and emerged with the feel for this experience as well as the facts and explanations.

Your evaluation of this fieldwork and their participation would he belpful to me as I plan for future courses and revise this one in particular. I would appreciate your answers to the following questions and any other comments you deem appropriate.

1. Were the early visits by me and the follow-up letter satisfactory in establishing the expectations for this experience?

2. Did the student(s) come prepared for observation and questioning?

3. Was the time in the field enough, too much, insufficient?

4. Did the students act responsibly on location and in their interactions with staff and elderly persons?

5. Do you have any other evaluations of this experience?

Again, I thank you for adding this important dimension to the learning of my students. I have notified the Dean of the College about your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Janet Huber Lowry
Assistant Professor of Sociology

JHL/d

The following evaluation is to be made with due consideration to the fact that this is a STUDENT in an Associate Degree program and that a level of competency appropriate to the first two years of college is expected. This form should be used in conjunction with the "Expectations of Students", in the Supervisor's Handbook.

We are grateful to you for the time and effort involved in supervising a student and completing this form.

A. Please give a brief description of the Internship assignment and schedule:

| B. Attributes of Students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Attendance/ Punctuality | Perfect attendance Always on time or before | Absent once Called Never Late | Absent once Didn't call Occasionally Late | Absent 2 or 3 times Usually Late | Frequently absent Usually Late | |
| 2. Appropriate Professional Appearance (Based on setting) | Always neat and in good taste | Neat, Not always appropriate | Sometimes careless or inappropriate | Untidy, Sometimes Inappropriate | Unsuitable | |
| 3. Professionalism | Conducts self in a manner appropriate to setting all of the time. | Most of the time. | Some of the time. | Infrequently. | Never. | |
| 4. Responsibility | Seeks additional responsibility. | Willingly accepts given responsibility. | Reluctant to accept additional responsibility. | Avoids responsibility. | Can't be given any responsibility. | |
| 5. Dependability | Extremely dependable. | Usually dependable. | Sometimes dependable. | Occasionally dependable. | Can't depend on this student. | |
| 6. Motivation/ Interest | Shows intense enthusiasm and interest in all work. | Shows interest. Enthusiasm is usually sustained. | Passive acceptance Rarely shows entnusiasm. | Shows little interest. | Doesn't want to work. | |

| C. Agency/Setting | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. Knowledge of Setting Function & Structure | 1<br>Excellent.<br>Knows and can fully explain setting. | 2<br>Good.<br>Knows & can explain most services | 3<br>Has some difficulty explaining function & structure. | 4<br>May know but can't explain function or structure. | 5<br>Doesn't understand function or structure. | |
| 8. Knowledge of Staff Responsibility. | 1<br>Excellent. Knows & can explain. Knows appropriate persons to handle situations. | 2<br>Can explain responsibilities. Usually brings situations to appropriate persons. | 3<br>Can explain some responsibilities. Doesn't always bring situations to appropriate persons. | 4<br>Can't explain all responsibilities. Usually doesn't bring situations to appropriate persons. | 5<br>Can't explain. Needs to be told. | |
| 9. Knowledge of Resource Network in Relationship to Setting. | 1<br>Excellent. Knows & can appropriately use resources effectively. | 2<br>Good. Knows many resources and how to use them. | 3<br>Knows some resources and attempts to use them. | 4<br>Doesn't know most resources. Uses them only if directed to. | 5<br>Doesn't know resources available. Uses inappropriately. | |
| 10. Knowledge of Population Served | 1<br>Excellent. Knows & can deal effectively with population. | 2<br>Knows population. Has little difficulty working with various populations. | 3<br>Knows something of population. Has to become more aware of actual individual characteristic. | 4<br>Doesn't appear to understand characteristics of population. | 5<br>Doesn't understand or accept population. | |
| 11. Confidentiality | 1<br>Always can be trusted with confidential information. | 2<br>Most times can be trusted. | 3<br>Occassionally can be trusted. | 4<br>Doesn't understand the need for confidentiality. | 5<br>Can't be trusted. | |
| 12. Record Keeping | 1<br>Excellent. Knows all systems. Can use them effectively. | 2<br>Very good--knows systems. Can use them with assistance. | 3<br>Sometimes. Knows system. Uses only with assistance. | 4<br>Occassionally can identify record items. Doesn't attempt to use them. | 5<br>Doesn't know system. Can't use it. | |

-24-

| D. Interaction/ Communication Skills | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. Empathy | 1 Outstanding. Relates well. | 2 Understands clients needs and usually can relate. | 3 Occassionally can understand and relate to clients. | 4 Needs assistance understanding & relating to clients. | 5 Doesn't understand clients or helping relationships. | |
| 14. Ability to relate on a one-to-one basis. | 1 Outstanding. Provides appropriate activities, motivation, resources. | 2 Most times provides appropriate assistance & services. | 3 Needs some supervision in providing appropriate assistance and services. | 4 Needs much supervision and assistance. | 5 Needs total assistance and constant supervision. | |
| 15. Ability to work in group situations. | 1 Outstanding. Keeps entire group interested and working. | 2 Usually keeps interest. Needs to work on including all members. | 3 Sometimes loses interest of group. Needs to plan better for all members. | 4 Usually loses group's interest. Can't keep all members working. | 5 Can't work with small groups. | |
| 16. Ability to observe & analyze situations | 1 Outstanding ability to observe and analyze. | 2 Usually knows what is going on. Can analyze most situations. | 3 Can observe but needs assistance in analyzing. | 4 Usually isn't aware of what is going on. Can't analyze. | 5 Has to be told what is going on. | |
| 17. Ability to evaluate situations and provide solutions. | 1 Outstanding ability to reach conclusions & provide solutions. | 2 Usually can evaluate. Not always provide solutions. | 3 Average judgement. Can evaluate with some assistance. | 4 Usually can't evaluate alternatives. | 5 Poor evaluations. Solutions often faulty. | |
| 18. Ability to communicate verbally | 1 Outstanding professional relates extremely well. | 2 Usually professional. Relates well most of the time. | 3 Needs to work on relating to staff and clients. | 4 Has difficulty communicating to client, making ideas known. | 5 Lacks appropriate skills. | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. Ability to communicate in writing | 1<br>Outstanding. Professional, accurate, neat. | 2<br>Usually accurate and neat. | 3<br>Needs to improve accuracy. Usually neat. | 4<br>Usually Inaccurate and careless. | 5<br>Can't communicate in writing. | |

E. Weakness of student. (Things that should be worked on)

F. Strengths of students (capabilities/improvements)

-26-

G. _____

Signature Title Date

H. STUDENT'S RESPONSE TO SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION:

1. I have read this evaluation and am in agreement _____

Signature Date

2. I disagree with this evaluation for the following reasons:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signature Date

APPENDIX: ABRIDGED SYLLABUS

COURSE: SOCIOLOGY 230 GROWING OLD IN AMERICA W'83

instructor: Janet Huber Lowry
office, hours, phone, class meeting time and room

GOALS: Knowledge

1. Understanding the impact of and the differences between cohort, aging, and period effects in human behavior.

2. Contributions of sociological theory to gerontology, including structural functionalism, conflict, social exchange, and symbol interactionism perspectives.

3. Historical overview on America's treatment of old age.

4. Cross-cultural and demographic information about the elderly now and in the future.

Skills

5. Improved written work integrating reading, class discussion, and observation through essays and journal format.

6. Oral contributions and presentations demonstrating sufficient grasp of reading material and everyday events.

7. Responsible and reflective participation in area organizations which deal with aging and the aged.

8. Increased sensitivity to the experiences of being old in America.

BOOKS:

EXPECTATIONS:

2. Field work in area organization for one day a week for three weeks. A day is a least 6 hours. Tuesday or Thursday arrangements have been made with field site administrators. Transportation cost is minimal with carpooling or use of bus.

3. Reading assignments should begin on the day indicated, be completed by the next class session, and reflected in the entries of your journal when applicable to the field experience.

5. Assignments are due by 4pm Wednesdays to my office door, K/J 122. There cannot be exceptions in so short a term. Handwriting is satisfactory if neat and legible. Typing should be double spaced. Please use just one side of the paper except for marginal notations in the journal entries made after rereading.

6. Grading for this course will be computed by these weightings: oral 25%, paper and project each 20%, journal / report 35%.

ASSIGNMENTS: Written

due 19th Second presentation - SPECIAL PROJECT - This research/ artistic effort of your own devising on a topic sufficiently limited in scope to be adequately reported out in 4-6 pages (1000-1500 words). (or to be negotiated). This may be a library study with journal articles, book reports integrated by theme, interview study, film, photography exhibit, multi-media, team reports, etc. You name it. You may utilize field site if permission can be obtained, but don't short change your journal if this option is employed.

due 26th Third exercise - JOURNAL AND FIELD REPORT - This effort will be evaluated according to two primary emphases. (1) Daily chronicle of events at site with observation distinguished from factual information and what is provided distinguished from what is solicited. (2) Reflections on text material related to field activities, (organized by chapters would be nice) thorough without excess. This exercise is the only evidence beyond oral participation of your understanding and application of substantive information provided by the text. It takes the place of a final for this course. It provides evidence of your critical reading in relation to experience. Field report should be separate from the journal conveying a brief evaluation of the field site in relation to the course goals. Limit yourself to 500 words, about 2 typed pages for the report.

Oral

General contributions expected throughout the course, especially for the three major class discussions scheduled and the one panel presentation based on field site groupings. Class discussion topics will feature historical aspects of aging with cross-cultural contrasts, bereavement, and social services. The panels will probably divide the class into three groups covering nursing homes, senior centers, and service agencies. See schedule dates.

SCHEDULE: January 1983

| day | date | content | reading | events |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | 3 | Introduction to Social Gerontology | text chp.13 & 1 Fischer 3-25 | class goals 4th field trip |
| W | 5 | Institutionalization (speaker on visiting) | Fischer 26-112 | "Peege" and "Kling" |
| F | 7 | Social Experiences and Explanations | text chp.4 & 10 Fischer 113-219 | **project proposal |
| M | 10 | Individual Experiences and Explanations | text chp.2 & 3 Fischer 220-270 | writing in my journal |
| M | 24 | Death and Dying (speaker & film) | text Epilogue Baum chp.8 | discussion Hospice panels |
| W | 26 | Evaluating America on Growing Old | | **journal & field report |